



2002 National Medal of Arts recipient Ming Cho Lee with Mrs. Laura Bush at the awards reception in March 2003.
Photo by Joselyn Augustino

National Medal of Arts

Created by Congress in 1984, the National Medal of Arts is conferred annually by the President to honor persons and organizations who have made extraordinary contributions to the excellence, support, growth, and availability of the arts in the United States. Unlike other arts awards, the National Medal of Arts is not limited to a single field or area of artistic endeavor.

The National Endowment for the Arts solicits nominations for the award, which are reviewed by the National Council on the Arts and then forwarded to the President for final selection. The awards, which are non-monetary, are presented each year at a special White House ceremony. The National Medal of Arts was designed by internationally renowned sculptor Robert Graham.

World events delayed awarding of the medals until March 2003, when President George W. Bush presented the 2002 National Medals in a ceremony at the White House. The Medal for Al Hirschfeld, who died in January 2003, was accepted by his wife. Mrs. Laura Bush and new National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Dana Gioia hosted a reception for the medalists at the White House after the ceremony.

National Medalists for 2002

Florence Knoll Bassett
Designer/Architect
Miami, FL

Trisha Brown
Dancer/Choreographer
New York, NY

Uta Hagen
Actor/Educator
New York, NY

Lawrence Halprin
*Landscape Architect/
Environmental Planner*
San Francisco, CA

Al Hirschfeld
Artist/Caricaturist
New York, NY
(deceased)

George Jones
Country Singer
Nashville, TN

Ming Cho Lee
Painter/Stage Designer
New York, NY

Philippe de Montebello
Museum Director
New York, NY

William "Smokey" Robinson
Singer/Songwriter
Detroit, MI